

Testimony Presented to the House Appropriations Commission Bill 4145

Shannon Nobles; Resident, Lansing MI. January 27, 2016

Good morning, Chair Pscholka and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition of House Bill 4145, a bill that would prohibit State of Michigan family planning funding from going to providers that offer abortion services. . I am Shannon Nobles, a resident of Lansing for the past six years and an occasional client of Planned Parenthood healthcare services.

Planned Parenthood is a health care provider, which has been around for over 100 years, and has offered affordable, safe and accessible services for women, children and men. These services range from preventive, primary care, which helps prevent unintended pregnancies through contraception, reducing the spread of sexually transmitted infections through testing and treatment, and screening for cervical and other cancers. Not only are their services reliable and accessible, but also are often times the only option for women of low income.

If we look at the state as a whole, as of 2015, Michigan is home to an estimated 2 million women who are of reproductive age, with nearly 600,000 of them enrolled in the Healthy Michigan Plan. This health care plan offered through the state is designed to assist individuals who do not make enough money to enroll in traditional insurance. Thus, we can imply that there are 600,000 women of reproductive age of lower income in our state. Not only do these women, aged 13 to 44 have a difficult time affording services outside of Planned Parenthood, but they may not be able to access these services due to the fact that 22 Michigan counties do not even have an OBGYN available. If one does not have reliable transportation, how can we expect them to travel outside the county for necessary health services?

As a young professional, it was not long ago that I was a struggling college student working multiple jobs and taking on a full course load of classes, barely making enough money to get by. While I lived in the dorms and had a meal plan, the cost of that living arrangement, plus books and other necessities did not leave much room for medical bills. While I was privileged to be on my parents' health insurance, the co-pays necessary for OBGYN preventative services came out of pocket, meaning I had to find a nearby health center, since my only transportation options were walking, biking or taking the CATA bus, that I could afford. Planned Parenthood was there for me to treat me on a sliding scale, answer my questions and provide important preventative health care. This harmful piece of legislation would deny that option for so many young women who are struggling to make ends meet for themselves and their families.

I urge you to oppose this piece of legislation that would strip so many women of the right to seek safe and necessary treatments for their health and well-being. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.